(f) *Mental Characteristics*

The usual racial classification based on physical characteristics being of limited value, it might be asked whether a better classification could not perhaps be based on certain mental peculiarities; for history points to considerable differences between groups and nations both with regard to their physical and their mental and emotional qualities.

Within the white race nations differ widely with regard to certain qualities such as aptitude for war, musical gifts, logical thinking, etc. Many anthropologists assert that among the Jews there is more mental than physical uniformity, and that it is a peculiar mentality which distinguishes them from the other European nations. It cannot be a mere accident that, throughout the Diaspora, the Jews have been mainly engaged in commerce, in which they could not have successfully maintained their position for thousands of years without excelling their neighbours in the necessary qualities—by being more imaginative, resourceful, and active. They have not, however, that superiority as against other Oriental nations, such as the Armenians and Syrians, who, in commerce, are equal, or even superior, to the Jews. To European eyes the Jews appear as the specific representatives of those qualities merely because

they are the only Oriental nation which has spread throughout Europe, and which, owing to the difference in religion, has preserved a separate existence.[1]

Also India and China have long had their merchant class, equal in skill to those of the Near East, while uncivilized or little civilized nations, such as the Negroes, or the Bed Indians, show little capacity for trade. It seems that commercial abilities are not a racial peculiarity of certain

[1] The Cahorsians, who were the most dangerous competitors of the Jews in medieval commerce, came from the town of Cahors in Southern France, which, in all probability, was a colony of the Syrians or Phoenicians, *i.e.* of a people closely related to the Jews.